DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 380 740 CG 026 154

AUTHOR	Coberly, Sally
TITLE	Making the Business Connection: Strategic Planning for Public/Private Partnerships: A Guide for the Aging Network.
INSTITUTION	Washington Business Group on Health, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Administration on Aging (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Mar 94
CONTRACT	90AT0473
NOTE	50p.; For a related document, see CE 026 155.
AVAILABLE FROM	National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging, Washington Business Group on Health, 777 N. Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20002 ($10 prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Aging (Individuals); *Corporate Support; *Older Adults; Policy Formation; Private Financial Support; *Private Sector; Program Development; Program Proposals; *Public Agencies; *Strategic Planning
IDENTIFIERS	*Elder Care; Employer Role; Population Aging; *Public Private Partnership Programs; Public Private Relationship

ABSTRACT

This is one in a series of five guidebooks on partnerships between aging agencies and businesses. The guidebook provides practical information to assist state and local aging agencies in developing strategic relationships with businesses in their communities. The focus is on how to craft an overall partnership strategy that provides the framework for developing partnerships in topic-specific areas: volunteerism, older worker employment, health promotion, and employer-sponsored eldercare. The book is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the history of public/private partnerships, discusses the impetus for business involvement in aging, outlines the expectations of both business and the aging network, and describes the legal and regulatory framework within which business and aging partnerships operate. Chapter 2 outlines what the aging network and business have to offer each other and chapter 3 describes the variety of partnerships that network agencies can forge with business. The mechanics of the process is discussed in chapter 4, along with a step-by-step strategic planning effort for initiating, establishing, and maintaining partnerships. The final chapter discusses the roles that State Units on Aging can play in facilitating and fostering partnerships at the local level. (RJM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

CG

ED 380 740

MAKING THE BUSINESS CONNECTION:

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. COBERLY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A GUIDE FOR THE AGING NETWORK

CG026154

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MAKING THE BUSINESS CONNECTION:

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

A GUIDE FOR THE AGING NETWORK

By Sally Coberly, Ph.D.

March, 1993

Washington Business Group on Health
National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 800 • Washington, DC 20002

Copies of this publication can be ordered for $10.00 from:

National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging
Washington Business Group on Health
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20002

Orders must be prepaid.

Publication design: Carole Anne Nelson, CNF Editorial Services, Hyattsville, MD

Older Americans Act
NATIONAL ELDERCARE CAMPAIGN

This project was supported, in part, by a grant, number 90AT0473, from the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC, 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Aging policy.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction: Exploring Public/Private Partnerships 1
- Purpose 2
- Methods 2
- Other Resources 2
- Organization of the Guidebook 3
- Audience 4

Chapter 1: Public/Private Partnerships: History and Background 5
- A Definition 6
- Business and Aging Partnerships 6
- Legal and Regulatory Framework 8

Chapter 2: Coming to the Table: Identifying Elements of Exchange 10
- Resources of the Aging Network 10
- Resources of the Private Sector 12

Chapter 3: Partnership Possibilities 13
- The Range of Partnerships 13
- Types of Partnerships 15

Chapter 4: Developing a Strategic Plan for Partnerships: A Step-by-Step Guide 19
- An Eight-Step Strategic Planning Process 20
- Step One: Determine Where You Are Now 20
- Step Two: Create and Communicate a Partnership Vision 21
- Step Three: Assess Internal Strengths and Weaknesses 24
- Step Four: Assess Partnership Opportunities 27
- Step Five: Develop a Plan for the Partnerships 32
- Step Six: Approach Business Partners 35
- Step Seven: Implement the Partnerships 37
- Step Eight: Evaluate Partnership Efforts 39

Chapter 5: Strategic Planning for Partnerships: Roles for State Units on Aging 40

End Notes 43

Acknowledgements

Welcome to *Making the Business Connection: Strategic Planning for Public/Private Partnerships—A Guide for the Aging Network*, one in a series of five guidebooks on partnerships between aging agencies and business. This guidebook was produced under the auspices of the National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging, a cooperative initiative of the U.S. Administration on Aging and the Washington Business Group on Health.

The purpose of the guidebook series is to provide practical information to assist state and local aging agencies in developing strategic relationships with businesses in their communities. In addition to this guidebook on strategic planning for public/private partnerships, other topics covered in this series include health promotion, older worker employment, volunteerism and employer-sponsored eldercare.

The author of this guidebook, Sally Coberly, Ph.D., is Associate Director of the National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging and Associate Director of WBGH's Institute on Aging, Work and Health. Assistance in conducting interviews was provided by Emily Bailet.

The Washington Business Group on Health would like to extend its appreciation to the many individuals and agencies whose generous contributions brought this project to fruition. Special thanks is extended to the Board of Directors of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging and to members of the aging network who participated in intensives at the annual meetings of NAAAA and the National Council on Aging. Ultimately, we are indebted to all of the "partners in action"—those in the aging network and private industry who were willing to share their time and tell us about their experiences with public/private partnerships.

Special appreciation is extended to the staff of the U.S. Administration on Aging for giving us the means and encouragement to complete this work.

Robert C. Levin
Director
National Eldercare Institute on
Business and Aging
Washington Business Group on Health

Introduction

Exploring Public/Private Partnerships

- *As part of its strategic plan to increase support for aging services through partnerships with the private sector, the Montgomery County Division of Elder Affairs hired a director of public/private sector partnership programs. The Nassau County Department of Senior Citizens, the Area Agency on Aging in Mineola, NY, created a Special Projects Unit within the Community Services Division to coordinate private sector relations.*
- *To assist Area Agencies on Aging and other network agencies in the state, the Division on Aging of the North Carolina Department of Human Resources organized a one-day workshop entitled Enhancing Eldercare Services Through the Development of Public/Private Partnerships, which was presented in two locations in the state.*
- *As part of the National Eldercare Campaign, the Kansas Department on Aging organized a State Business and Aging Coalition to explore opportunities for greater business involvement in and support for aging issues, programs and services.*
- *To prepare for marketing services to the private sector, the Texoma Area Agency on Aging secured the services of a Senior Corps of Retired Executives volunteer to help prepare a business plan. The resulting plan included a per-unit cost for each of the agency's services, allowing it to develop realistic fee schedules for marketed services.*
- *More active involvement with the private sector, particularly local hospitals, was a specific goal included in the West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging's area plan. The Tampa-based agency believed that cooperation in the area of health promotion offered significant potential for eventual expansion to a wide range of private partnerships.*

Over the past decade, many State and Area Agencies on Aging and other aging organizations have begun to reach out to the private sector to establish initiatives that improve or expand services to older adults in their communities. As a result, the phrase "public/private partnership" has become part of the day-to-day vocabulary of the aging network.

Whether it has been the development of programs to provide services to employed caregivers, the design of health education programs for seniors, or the expansion of the network's home-delivered meal programs, aging network agencies and business organizations of all sizes have come to see these public/private partnerships as valuable opportunities to promote the mission of the aging network while helping to meet corporate goals.

...aging network agencies and business organizations of all sizes have come to see ...public/private partnerships as valuable opportunities...

...the satisfaction you and your staff derive from your agency's involvement in public/private partnerships can be substantial.

More recently, through its National Eldercare Campaign, the U.S. Administration on Aging has continued to encourage State and Area Agencies on Aging and Project CARE Coalitions to pursue collaborative activities with businesses and other nontraditional partners that will help older Americans maintain their independence.

One outgrowth of the network's growing involvement in public/private partnerships has been increased attempts to view partnerships strategically. That is, State and Area Agencies and other network agencies are looking at how involvement with the private sector fits into their overall mission and goals, and how they can develop a proactive plan for partnerships. The examples cited on the previous page highlight the range of strategic activities these agencies are undertaking.

Purpose

This guidebook is one of five in a series prepared for the U.S. Administration on Aging's National Eldercare Campaign. The purpose of the guides is to provide information to State and Area Agencies on Aging, Project CARE Coalitions, and other interested organizations about public/private partnerships—what they are, how they can be used to further the mission of aging agencies, and how they can be structured and implemented.

This guidebook focuses on how to craft an overall partnership strategy that provides the framework for developing partnerships in specific content areas. The other four documents in the series provide guidance on developing partnerships in topic-specific areas—volunteerism, older worker employment, health promotion, and employer-sponsored eldercare.

Methods

Information to develop this guidebook was gathered from a wide variety of sources including interviews with aging network agencies and private business organizations, focus groups with representatives of the aging network, training sessions at national conferences and the National Leadership Institute on Aging, and reviews of literature and partnership examples. In addition, leaders from business and aging formed task force groups in four communities—Atlanta, Chicago, Seattle, and Boston—to assist in the development of the topic-specific materials.

We've also drawn from our experience here at the Washington Business Group on Health with the AoA-funded Partnerships in Aging Proje[illegible] which provided seed money to communities to initiate public/private partnerships.

Other Resources

This guidebook provides a broad outline of the steps involved in developing a strategic approach to public/private partnerships. Readers interested in learning more about the types of partnerships currently being undertaken in the aging network, or in delving into specific aspects of partnerships such as pricing or contracts may wish to consult the following resources:

Establishing a Partnership for Eldercare: A Guide to Assisting Working Caregivers (1990). Partnership for Eldercare, New York City Department for the Aging, 280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007.

Handbook on Employer Eldercare Services: Determining Costs and Charges for Program Development and Operations (1991). Denise Klein, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 1112 16th Street NW, Suite 100, Washington, DC 20036.

The Game Plan: Step-by-Step to Successful Business and Aging Partnerships (1993). Margaret Wylde and Margaret Lynn Duggar, National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging, American Society on Aging, 833 Market Street, Suite 512, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Public/Private Partnerships in Health Promotion: A Guide for the Aging Network (1992). Atlanta Regional Commission, 3715 Northside Parkway, 200 Northcreek, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30327.

Public/Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment: A Guide for the Aging Network (1992). Denise Jessup, Washington Business Group on Health, 777 N. Capitol St., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20002.

Public/Private Partnerships in Volunteerism: A Guide for the Aging Network (1992). Chicago Department on Aging, National Council on the Aging, Washington Business Group on Health, WBGH, 777 N. Capitol St., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20002.

Building Support for Employer-Sponsored Eldercare: A Guide for the Aging Network (1993). National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 1112 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Business Leadership in Aging: A Compendium of Program Initiatives (1992). U.S. Administration on Aging and Washington Business Group on Health (available from WBGH).

Public/Private Partnerships: Examples from the Aging Network (1993). National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging, WBGH. (see sidebar for additional information)

Organization of the Guidebook

This guidebook is organized into five chapters:

Chapter One provides an overview of the history of public/private partnerships, discusses the impetus for business involvement in aging, outlines the expectations of both business and the aging network, and describes the legal and regulatory framework within which business and aging partnerships operate.

Chapter Two lays the groundwork for identifying appropriate partnership opportunities by outlining what the aging network and business have to offer each other.

Chapter Three describes the variety of partnerships that network agencies can forge with business, from the simple, one-time-only event to the more complex, long-term contractual fee-for-service relationship.

Looking for Ideas for Public/Private Partnerships?

Two compendiums published by the Washington Business Group on Health provide examples of partnerships and other business initiatives that might form the basis for collaborative efforts.

Business Leadership in Aging: A Compendium of Program Initiatives profiles 93 companies that were nominated for the 1991 Business and Aging Leadership Awards. A number of the examples include partnerships with aging agencies.

Public/Private Partnerships: Examples from the Aging Network describes 75 business and aging partnerships undertaken by State and Area Agencies on Aging.

Both volumes are available from WBGH.

Chapter Four provides a step-by-step strategic planning process for initiating, establishing and maintaining partnerships.

Chapter Five discusses the roles that State Units on Aging can play in facilitating and fostering partnerships at the local level.

Audience

We believe that this guidebook will be useful to both seasoned veterans and novices in the world of public/private partnerships. Our hope is that more experienced agencies will use the steps outlined in Chapter Four to develop a strategic plan for partnerships. We believe these agencies are ready to tackle some of the larger questions about how partnerships fit into the agency's mission and goals, to explore some of the legal and ethical issues that may arise, and to chart a course for the future. For novices, the guidebook offers a vocabulary, examples, specific steps, and "tips" that can make the first foray into partnerships less intimidating.

Regardless of where you stand, we encourage you to pick and choose the information that is most useful to your needs. Experienced agencies, for example, may want to skip ahead to the step-by-step strategic planning process outlined in Chapter 4. Where possible, we have tried to address the unique needs of aging network agencies that operate in rural environments, or in communities where large employers are not prevalent.

For the sake of simplicity, we have addressed the steps in Chapter 4 to Area Agencies on Aging. We believe, however, that the strategic planning process and tips can be used by any and all members of the aging network, including State Units on Aging, Project CARE Coalitions, and service providers. Because of their oversight responsibilities, State Units on Aging have a special role to play *vis-a-vis* area agencies and their partnership development efforts. This and other roles for State Units on Aging are discussed in Chapter 5.

Before you plunge in, we offer these final words: Developing public/private partnerships can be both fun and hard work. Yet the rewards—to you, to your agency and its staff, and to older persons in your community—can be great.

Whether it's seeing a new service available for the first time in your community, watching staff develop renewed enthusiasm for their work, reaching a new target population of older persons, increasing your agency's visibility in the community, or simply realizing that you can make your agency's budget go farther, the satisfaction you and your staff derive from your agency's involvement in public/private partnerships can be substantial.

We hope this guidebook provides the advice and encouragement that will help you move ahead.

Chapter 1

Public/Private Partnerships: History and Background

American businesses have a long history of being actively involved in the community. Partnerships with public and other not-for-profit organizations are a logical extension of more traditional philanthropic and community outreach efforts.

Although public/private partnerships are a relatively recent phenomenon within the field of aging, they have been used for a number of decades in such fields as community development, education and child care. Indeed, the earliest examples of partnerships can be traced to the beginning of this century, but the majority of examples in the community development field date from the 1960s and '70s when local governments turned to partnerships as a way to hasten the pace of urban renewal. Such partnerships typically involved tax concessions or other inducements to encourage developers to undertake building projects, such as low-income housing, that otherwise would not be pursued through the private market. The benefits of these partnerships were immediately clear to both parties—communities were able to achieve their community development goals and developers prospered financially.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, however, the range of activities pursued through partnerships expanded dramatically, and public/private collaborations were explicitly sanctioned by the federal government. For example, the Reagan Administration actively encouraged executive branch agencies to promote public/private partnerships at the local level. In the mid-1980s, the U.S. Administration on Aging used discretionary funding to support a number of projects that encouraged partnerships between State and Area Agencies and businesses.

Perhaps most importantly, during the 1980s the private sector began to participate in partnerships with the public sector for reasons other than immediate financial gain. This was particularly evident in the area of education, as businesses began to recognize the relationship between the community's educational system and a trained workforce. Adopt-a-school programs symbolized corporate America's realization that it had a stake in the educational system, even if the "payoff" was in the future. Businesses also began to explore public/private partnerships in the area of child care as women became a permanent and increasingly important segment of the workforce. These partnerships helped ensure that women would return to the workplace after maternity leave and would continue to be productive on the job.

"The overriding principle in partnerships is to achieve a 'win-win-win' scenario, in which the aging partner finds new resources, the private partner gets something it wants, and the client is served, either directly or indirectly."

Public/Private Partnerships in Volunteerism: A Guide for the Aging Network

"Among our employees who volunteer, it's helped develop team-building skills. Management is looking very closely at volunteerism as part of its leadership training efforts."

Dick Dolan
Administrator
Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing

These arrangements helped establish the precedent for public/private partnerships and provided the general outline for how future relationships would be structured. Today, collaborative efforts are used to confront such pressing community and social concerns as housing, literacy, unemployment, education, maternal and child health, the environment, the arts, and services for older persons. Moreover, most publicly supported institutions have established ties of one sort or another to the private sector.

A Definition

At its simplest, a public/private partnership can be defined as "cooperation among individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors for mutual benefit."[1] The Pennsylvania Department of Aging views a public/private partnership as "a joint endeavor, formal or informal, between public and private sector groups to define and address community needs for their mutual benefit."[2] Other definitions stress the presence of a common problem or a common goal which is addressed through a joint venture.[3]

The use of the word community in public/private partnership definitions is important because it suggests that the benefits of the partnership extend beyond the immediate partners to the "community as a whole." Thus, education partnerships benefit a particular school, a specific corporation and the community-at-large by creating a citizenry that is able to participate fully in the economic, intellectual and civic life of the community. Similarly, by helping to ensure the economic, physical and emotional well being of older people in the community, business and aging partnerships benefit the community-at-large.

The definition provided above is sufficiently broad to encompass a wide array of activities between the public and private sectors. In adopting this definition, we have deliberately chosen to err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion, including partnerships which are both short- and long-term and which involve a variety of financial arrangements ranging from one-time-only cash or in-kind donations to continuing support, to contracting and fee-for-service agreements. Indeed, we believe that aging network agencies are the best judges of what constitutes a public/private partnership. Our goal is to provide information that will help the aging network structure partnerships that meet the needs and preferences of individual states, agencies and communities.

Business and Aging Partnerships

The motivations for the aging network to participate in public/private partnerships are fairly obvious. Many agencies have experienced an increase in demand for services at the same time that public budgets have remained flat or declined. Thus, many agencies are seeking new sources of revenue to maintain current levels of service; others are looking for support to expand the volume of existing services or to offer new services. Still others are hoping to stimulate the business community to provide goods and services that older persons in the community would like to purchase. Some are also turning to the business community for management expertise.

Businesses are turning to the aging network for a variety of reasons as well. Some are looking for expertise to help them respond to internal pressures to meet specific corporate needs or solve aging-related personnel and human resource problems. For example, companies may pursue relationships with the aging network to address such issues as how to:

- Involve older workers and retirees in corporate-sponsored health education and wellness programs.
- Help older workers prepare for retirement.
- Recruit, retrain and retain older adults for a variety of job opportunities.
- Foster volunteer opportunities for the growing number of older adults seeking new roles outside the workforce.
- Develop personnel and benefit policies and programs that respond to the needs of a growing population of employed caregivers.[4]
- Meet the needs of older consumers through more effective marketing and new product development.

The external environment also plays a role in fostering partnerships. Some companies respond to aging issues out of a sense of social responsibility and a commitment to the communities in which they operate as well as in response to specific community needs. Others view partnerships as part of a larger marketing or human resource strategy which emphasizes team building and strengthening the morale, enthusiasm, productivity, and commitment of employees. Partnerships also provide an opportunity for companies to involve their retirees in projects that benefit the community while strengthening loyalty to the firm.

Regardless of their specific motivations, private sector participants, like their aging network counterparts, expect partnerships to generate specific benefits such as positive public relations, improved employee morale, retiree loyalty, or financial gain. A company's decision to participate in a specific partnership will, of course, depend on the nature of the partnership and how well it responds to the firm's immediate and longer term needs and interests. An employer with a sizeable segment of its workforce age 45 and older may be particularly receptive to proposals for partnerships in the area of eldercare, for example. A firm with a large retiree population may respond favorably to partnerships that involve retirees as volunteers.

In looking at the factors that motivate collaboration between business and the aging network, what becomes clear is that both parties often share the same agenda. Aging agencies want additional employment opportunities for older workers; businesses want to hire reliable, skilled employees. Businesses want to provide volunteer opportunities for their retirees; aging agencies need additional unpaid personnel to stretch existing programs and services. Aging agencies need printed materials to advertise programs and benefits; businesses need opportunities to promote themselves to older consumers. And the list goes on.

"No doubt the prime motivating force behind the formation of these partnerships is the fact that the funding for the Older Americans Act programs has not grown as it should have in the last decade. Increasingly, State and Area Agencies on Aging are looking to the private sector for ways to expand their services."

Hon. Thomas J. Downey
Public/Private Partnerships: The Opportunities, The Risks
Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Services
U.S. House Select Committee on Aging, June 5, 1990

What should be clear is that there are many instances where the aging network and business share common goals and agendas.

What should be clear is that there are many instances where the aging network and business share common goals and agendas. Partnerships provide the opportunity for both parties to have their needs met with mutual benefit.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The 1992 Amendments to the Older Americans Act set out new language governing the way in which Area Agencies on Aging must describe in their area plan the relationships they have with private sector organizations. These Amendments codify much of the language contained in the Administration on Aging's 1990 Program Instruction on corporate eldercare.[5]

In its Program Instruction, AoA clearly indicated that while it "encourages State and Area Agencies on Aging to engage in appropriate relations with corporations in the development and implementation of eldercare programs," these activities should not conflict with or compromise an Area Agency's ability to carry out its statutory missions under the Older Americans Act. More specifically, AoA asked states to proscribe corporate eldercare agreements that require exclusivity and withholding of information, and instructed states to develop policies to ensure that public funds are not used to supplement third-party payments.

Specifically, the new Amendments require that Area Agencies describe in the area plan all activities funded by the private sector and provide assurances that such activities conform to the responsibilities of the AAA and to the laws, regulations and policies of the State Unit on Aging. The Area Agency must also maintain the integrity and public purpose of services provided under Title III of the Act, and disclose to AoA and the SUA the identity of each nongovernmental entity with whom it has a contractual or commercial relationship, as well as the nature of that relationship. The AAA must also demonstrate that there will be no loss or diminution in either the quantity or quality of Title III services as a result of the relationship and, in fact, that the quantity or quality of Title III services will be enhanced as a result of such relationships/contracts.

Furthermore, at the request of either the Commissioner on Aging or the state, the AAA must disclose all sources and expenditures of funds the agency receives or expends to provide services to older individuals and provide assurances that Title III funds will not be used to pay any of the costs associated with carrying out a contract or commercial relationship that is not carried out to implement Title III. Finally, the Act requires AAAs to ensure that preference will not be given to particular older individuals as a result of a contract or commercial relationship that is not carried out to implement Title III.[6]

Given the broad scope of activities encompassed by Title III, the reference to contracts or relationships that are "not carried out to implement this title [Title III]" suggests that there may be considerable leeway in how these provisions are ultimately interpreted. Although the Administration on Aging has not yet issued regulations to accompany the Amendments, the Amendments themselves do not appear to create significant barriers to establishing public/private partnerships.

In addition to the Older Americans Act, publicly sponsored Area Agencies on Aging also will be guided by the policies, laws, and regulations that govern the legal entity that houses the AAA, whether it be a county, city or council of governments. Private not-for-profit Area Agencies will be responsible to their boards of directors. Thus AAAs will need to be mindful not only of the policies and guidelines put forward by the Older Americans Act and their State Units on Aging, but also those of their parent organization.

While it is beyond the scope of this guidebook to fully explore the legal and regulatory issues surrounding the development of public/private partnerships in the aging network, we believe it is important to remind Area Agencies that these issues must be addressed. Clearly, AAAs need to be mindful of policies developed by their State Units and parent organizations; they may also wish to develop their own internal set of guidelines to govern the development of public/private partnerships.

In defining the proper role of public/private partnerships in aging, however, it is important to remember that many Area Agencies on Aging are already engaged in partnerships, some with initiatives dating from the early 1980s. Thus, future policies should take into account not only the intent of the Older Americans Act, but also the lessons of past experience.

Conclusion

Business and aging partnerships appear to be a natural extension of the historical movement toward greater collaboration between the public and private sectors. Public/private partnerships offer the opportunity for both sectors to address mutual problems through mutually beneficial solutions.

"We believe....that each of us must pioneer new and expanded sources of public-private partnerships if we, as a Nation, are to respond to the needs of increasing numbers of older persons."

U.S. Administration on Aging
Program Instruction 90-06
April 10, 1990

Chapter 2

Coming to the Table: Identifying Elements of Exchange

By their very definition, partnerships presume an element of exchange.

As we pointed out in Chapter One, public/private partnerships are win-win situations in which both partners receive benefits from a joint activity or relationship. By their very definition, partnerships presume an element of exchange. In this chapter we further identify and elaborate what the aging network and businesses have to offer each other that makes partnerships desirable and possible.

Specific steps on how to identify potential business partners in your community are presented in Chapter Four. Here we're concerned with the general categories of resources that form the elements of exchange. Without something to "exchange," there would be very little interest in partnerships by either set of players. Accordingly, we identify first the knowledge, expertise, skills, opportunities, and other resources that the aging network can bring to the business community, followed by a similar analysis of what businesses have to offer aging network agencies and the communities they serve.

Resources of the Aging Network

As indicated earlier, business's interests in aging are driven by both internal and external pressures. They have specific age-related issues or problems they need addressed such as preparing employees for retirement, responding to the needs of caregivers, or reaching the mature consumer. They may also have a broad social responsibility mandate to address community needs, including those of older citizens.

In order to respond to these pressures, businesses need information not only about the characteristics of the older population, but also about the aging process, programs, and community services. In short, businesses need what the aging network is best able to provide—expertise about aging. Specific knowledge and expertise possessed by many, if not all, State and Area Agencies on Aging and other network agencies include:

- socio/demographic characteristics of the older population
- health status and functional limitations
- utilization of health and social services and insurance coverage
- health behaviors and preferences for delivery and treatment
- employment and retirement trends
- expenditure patterns and consumer preferences
- caregiving patterns.

While not exhaustive, this list highlights the kind of socio-demographic data residing with or accessible to aging network agencies that may be of interest to specific businesses. This knowledge is important for businesses interested in marketing products and services, managing older worker and retiree health care costs, designing caregiver programs, and developing recruitment strategies.

Second, the aging network is experienced in designing programs that address specific age-related issues or problems. For example, many aging agencies have historically involved older volunteers in their programs and know how to design and structure successful programs that keep older volunteers involved and enthusiastic. They have experience designing screening and other health promotion programs so that they appeal to older adults. They've counseled older workers and know how to develop recruitment and training strategies that work well with older applicants. In short, aging network staff know how to translate their knowledge of aging and the aging process into programs that work for older adults. This experience is particularly appealing to businesses interested in designing health promotion programs, developing retiree volunteer initiatives, or structuring training programs for older workers.

Third, the aging network is familiar with the system of health and social services in the state and community and has identified gaps that might be met through partnerships or corporate philanthropy. This knowledge and expertise is important for businesses who want to assist working caregivers or who are searching for ways to meet their social responsibility goals and fulfill their commitment to improving the community.

Fourth, the aging network has access to older adults through aging programs, senior centers, newsletters, and other communication vehicles. Access is important to businesses who want to recruit older workers or who want to market their name and products to older consumers. The network also knows how to communicate effectively with older adults, whether through focus groups, meetings or written materials.

Finally, State and Area Agencies on Aging have a mandate as the entities sanctioned by federal, state and local government to plan and advocate on behalf of older adults. While these agencies and other aging network organizations need to be careful about when and how they apply their mandate, they should not overlook the fact that they can lend credibility to efforts undertaken by the private sector on behalf of older adults.

While we believe these resources will be fairly consistent throughout the aging network's agencies, there may, of course, be unique resources possessed by individual agencies that also can constitute an element of exchange. One of the steps in planning for partnerships outlined in Chapter Four is to conduct an assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses; additional resources may be identified as part of that exercise.

"The Pima Council on Aging and the University of Arizona added credence to our efforts to open a claims office staffed by older people in Tucson."

Chuck Ackland, Northwestern National Life Insurance Company, ***Public/ Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment: A Guide for the Aging Network***

Resources of the Private Sector

Like the aging network, the private sector brings a wide variety of resources to the partnership table. The most obvious, of course, is financial support, whether in the form of cash or in-kind donations and services. The possibilities are virtually endless and are limited only by the imagination of the parties involved. Common examples include: cash support for specific services or programs; donations of supplies, equipment and space; and in-kind services such as catering, printing, transportation, public relations, and advertising. Many partnerships involve all three—cash support, donations and in-kind services.

Second, business partners often have management expertise or specific skills that can form the basis of a partnership with an aging network agency. Accounting, computer, public relations, marketing or other skills can be "borrowed" by aging agencies via loaned personnel or volunteerism programs to improve the capacity of the network to plan and deliver services to older adults.

Third, like their aging network counterparts, businesses provide access to potential clients or customers, whether they be volunteers, caregivers, older workers, retirees, or other employers and supporters.

Fourth, businesses can lend visibility, credibility and legitimacy to aging network activities. Business involvement can not only help in publicizing network programs and activities, but also can signal to others in the state and community that both the project and your organization are worthy of their support as well.

Again, this list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to suggest the range of resources available from the business community. Individual businesses may have characteristics or resources that are made valuable because of the unique circumstances of the state or community.

Conclusion

Both the aging network and business have something the other wants, whether it be information, access, funds, or legitimacy. Successful partnerships occur when both parties are able to identify a specific activity that will allow the desired exchange to take place. It is important to remember that the exchange does not have to be equal. Indeed, it may be difficult for partners to even measure, let alone value, the resources being exchanged.

Both the aging network and business have something the other wants...

18

Chapter 3

Partnership Possibilities

The range of partnership opportunities available to the aging network is extensive. Accordingly, we use this chapter to provide a basic outline of the types of partnerships that typically have been developed by aging network agencies and to identify the dimensions along which partnerships vary. Although brief examples are provided to illustrate selected partnership types, we urge you to turn to the four companion guidebooks in this series as well as the volume *Public/Private Partnerships: Examples from the Aging Network* for additional, more in-depth descriptions of specific partnerships.

The Range of Partnerships

Before exploring the range of partnership possibilities, we believe it's useful to point out that, in addition to differences in their specific content, partnerships vary tremendously along several dimensions. These include: initiation, leadership, scope or scale, complexity, and duration. Each of these dimensions is examined below.

Initiation

Although the purpose of this guidebook is to provide information that will enable aging network agencies to take the lead in establishing public/private partnerships, it is important to remember that in many instances partnerships are initiated by businesses or third-party organizations. A business may approach you, for example, about offering eldercare services to its employed caregivers, about developing a pre-retirement planning program, or about providing volunteer opportunities for the company's retirees.

Third parties, whether individuals or organizations, also can be the catalyst for collaborative initiatives. A psychologist or social worker may suggest that an employer work with your agency to develop an eldercare program. An employment agency may propose that an older worker employment and training organization develop a targeted training program to meet the needs of a specific employer. Again, the possibilities are endless and point to the importance of you and other staff constantly "marketing" your organization to non-traditional (non-aging) agencies and the community-at-large.

...the possibilities are endless and point to the importance of...constantly "marketing" your organization to non-traditional (non-aging) agencies and the community-at-large.

Leadership/Commitment

Public/private partnerships also vary in terms of the amount and quality of leadership and commitment provided by the parties involved. Generally, the issues of leadership and commitment are more crucial when a partnership involves an ongoing project or relationship. Sponsorship of an ongoing event that prominently features the name and logo of the corporate partner, for example, is likely to be accompanied by stronger business involvement and leadership than say, a one-time donation of printing. In proposing or responding to partnership opportunities, you need to consider what will be required in the way of corporate leadership and commitment and, based on that assessment, take steps to ensure that the appropriate levels of leadership and commitment are forthcoming.

Similarly, you will need to ensure the presence of leadership within your own organization as well as the ability of your agency to commit that leadership to partnership development efforts. You may choose to designate a single individual to be responsible for partnership development efforts, or you may prefer to infuse responsibility throughout the organization. Either way, you must ensure that leadership and commitment are sufficient to carry partnership efforts to completion.

The beauty of public/private partnerships is that they can be tailored to fit the needs, circumstances and capacities of individual communities and agencies.

Scope/Scale

Partnerships come in all sizes, shapes and colors. Some are very modest, involving perhaps no more than an in-kind donation of a room for a two-hour meeting, while others are very grand, involving the commitment of hundreds of thousand of dollars. Some serve 10 seniors; others serve 1,000. Some focus on a single senior center; others target an entire network of services.

The beauty of public/private partnerships is that they can be tailored to fit the needs, circumstances and capacities of individual communities and agencies. Although partnerships vary along the scope/scale dimension, there are no "rules" that dictate how partnerships should be used or structured. The choice of how "large" or "small" a partnership effort should be is left entirely up to those who initiate it.

Complexity

Similarly, partnerships vary in terms of their level of complexity. Some involve elaborate contracting agreements—such as in several corporate eldercare agreements—that govern the behavior of both parties; others operate on the strength of a handshake or other informal agreement. Some involve a multitude of interactions that require careful tracking and follow-up—such as in a corporate retiree volunteer clearinghouse—while others are limited to simple, clearly defined tasks. Again, depending on your agency's interests and capacities, you may choose to pursue partnerships that are relatively simple or complex. "Simple" partnerships can, of course, lay the groundwork for more complex relationships.

Duration

Finally, public/private partnerships can be differentiated based on their duration, both in terms of the event or project that provides the focus for the partnership and the relationship between the partners themselves. Some partnerships are formed around one-time-only events; when the event is concluded, the partnership is disbanded. In other cases, one-time only-events lay the groundwork for additional joint efforts. In still other instances, partners support an ongoing event, branching or not branching out to other collaborative activities as desired.

While we believe these variations will make intuitive sense to most readers, we also believe that some of you have not pursued partnership efforts because they have seemed too overwhelming, too complex and too time-consuming. Indeed, many of the public/private partnerships that have received extensive publicity in the field of aging are large-scale efforts that only urban, well-staffed agencies are likely to pursue.

As the foregoing discussion suggests, however, there is truly something for everyone in the realm of public/private partnerships. Small and simple is as appropriate as large and complex. Partnerships with local owner-run businesses are as important as those with large national corporations. The right public/private partnership is one that you and your agency feel comfortable pursuing and that has a reasonable chance of success.

Types of Partnerships

There are a number of ways to classify public/private partnerships—by their content, by their size, etc. Here we lay out very general or even "generic" types of partnerships, realizing of course that no classification scheme will capture all the possible examples that may exist. Our focus is on the overall purpose of the partnership. Six "generic" types of partnerships are discussed below.

Maintaining or Expanding Existing Services

In the wake of stagnating or declining budgets, many aging agencies have turned to public/private partnerships in an effort to maintain or expand existing services. These agencies have looked for private partners to provide basic financial support, to donate materials and supplies, and to provide in-kind services that can directly contribute to the maintenance or expansion of a specific service.

The New York City Department for the Aging's *Citymeals-on-Wheels* partnership with Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc., for example, allowed the city to expand its home-delivered meals program to weekends and holidays. When the Area Agency on Aging in Montgomery County, Maryland, could no longer afford to print a service directory for seniors, it worked with the local newspaper to produce an eight-page insert that included a directory of services as well as articles and advertising targeted to seniors. With a 70 percent plus penetration rate among county households, the newspaper reached a sizeable portion of the county's seniors, probably more than through the previous senior center-based distribution.

In the wake of stagnating or declining budgets, many aging agencies have turned to public/private partnerships in an effort to maintain or expand existing services.

[Business initiative] partnerships present opportunities to expand the range of goods and services available to seniors, especially those with middle and upper incomes.

Launching and Supporting New Services

Partnerships are also useful for launching new services that are needed or desired by the senior community, but that cannot be provided within the scope of the agency's existing budget. For example, the Kansas Power and Light Company provided in-kind legal expertise and financial resources for printing that allowed the Kansas Department on Aging to develop a legal guide for seniors that provides valuable information about both federal and state programs. In Lincoln, Nebraska, the AAA teamed up with the Peed Corporation and the Lincoln Public School System to initiate *Youth Educating Seniors (YES)*, a project in which high school students volunteer to teach basic computer skills to senior citizens. Through its partnership with Public Service Company of Colorado, the local gas and electric utility, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (the Area Agency on Aging) receives a fee to provide case management services to seniors identified through the utility company's Gatekeeper program. Without this private sector support, the agency would not be able to operate the program.

Supporting Business Initiatives

Although perhaps less familiar to the aging network than the first two types of partnerships described above, these partnerships present opportunities to expand the range of goods and services available to seniors, especially those with middle and upper incomes. These partnerships are often initiated by businesses that believe they have products and services of value to older people, but who have had difficulty marketing such services.

For example, in Montgomery County, Maryland, the Division of Elder Affairs is working with Golden Net, an Annapolis-based company that brokers a network of in-home and repair services, to expand its services into the county. The company will conduct a series of seminars for the county's seniors on such issues as how to choose a contractor, and how to spot and avoid home-repair scams. In exchange, the Area Agency will publicize the seminar series to older adults in the county, providing critical exposure for Golden Net.

These partnerships also can involve aging network agencies seeking businesses to fulfill gaps in the consumer market. Again, after identifying pharmaceutical management services as an unmet need in the county, the Montgomery County Division of Elder Affairs identified a pharmacy in nearby Washington, DC, willing to speak on the topic to groups of seniors living in private apartment buildings. As a result, many of these seniors are now having the pharmacy deliver their medications in bubble packs to facilitate compliance.

The extent to which you pursue these kinds of partnerships may depend on the demographic characteristics of the senior population, the types of businesses in your state or community, and your assessment of where your agency should devote its time and resources.

Expanding the Capacity of the Aging Network

Flat budgets affect not only an agency's ability to provide a given level of services to seniors, but also its ability to invest in itself. Public/private partnerships are one strategy for using non-public monies for capacity-building efforts. Examples include using corporate employees and retirees as volunteers in aging programs, equipment donations, financial contributions, and loaned executives or other technical personnel for specific projects such as developing a marketing plan or overhauling the accounting system.

The Texoma Area Agency on Aging in Denison, Texas, for example, used a former executive from the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) to help the agency convert its area plan to a business plan. The resulting information on costs per unit of service has allowed the agency to develop realistic cost estimates for providing services to businesses. In Chicago, the Department on Aging has teamed up with the Park Hyatt Hotel to meet the needs of the city's seniors through the volunteer efforts of hotel employees. Requests for one-on-one volunteers are faxed to the Hotel's personnel office to be matched with interested employee volunteers. In Gulfport, Mississippi, a private vendor donated 170 of 200 needed igloo containers to the Southern Mississippi AAA for use in its home-delivered meals program. Southwestern Bell Telephone Company made a cash grant to the Regional Council AAA in Kansas City, Missouri, which allowed it to computerize its meal program data base and long-term care directory.

Increasing Public Education and Awareness of Aging Issues

Increasing competition for public resources means that State and Area Agencies will need to work even harder to ensure that public officials and other decision makers are knowledgeable about the needs and concerns of older people and their families. Moreover, activities to increase public awareness of aging and to place aging on the agenda of non-traditional organizations are key components of the National Eldercare Campaign. The participation of private sector organizations in aging programs not only increases public awareness of aging issues, but also lends legitimacy to the aging network's activities.

To increase awareness of aging issues in Kansas, the Department on Aging works with the Kansas Press Association to prepare articles about aging issues and concerns which are circulated in Kansas Senior Press packets to 248 daily and weekly newspapers in the state. More than 138 newspapers have published the articles, providing a public education campaign that reaches thousands of readers each week. The effort has also encouraged many local newspapers to establish a regular senior page.

Partnerships that involve a company's employees as volunteers often bring participants into direct contact with the opportunities and challenges of aging for the first time. This heightened awareness extends beyond the immediate experience and may lead to an ongoing interest in the needs and concerns of the community's older adults, as well as increased political and financial support, particularly through matching contribution programs.

Partnerships that involve a company's employees as volunteers often bring participants into direct contact with the opportunities and challenges of aging for the first time.

Scott Paper Company's "Dollars for Doers" program, for example, provides cash contributions to senior centers and other aging agencies based on the number of volunteer hours provided by the company's retirees. And, by becoming aware of the State and Area Agency and service providers in the aging network, these partnership participants are often better prepared to help their older friends and family members access services when the need arises.

Many corporate partners also can assist with education and awareness efforts targeted to the community at large. In-kind contributions for designing, printing and distributing printed materials are common; some companies also can assist with the production of videos and public service announcements. The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services Division of Aging, for example, worked with the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce to publish a 12-page "newspaper" on eldercare and distribute it to the state's business community.

Involving representatives of the private sector on boards and advisory councils...creates new allies and voices that can support aging programs to public officials and other decision makers.

Expanding Advocacy Allies

Closely related to the type of partnership described immediately above, these partnerships seek to expand the advocacy base for aging. Involving representatives of the private sector on boards and advisory councils, for example, creates new allies and voices that can support aging programs to public officials and other decision makers. Corporate leaders involved in partnerships can provide visibility in the media, deliver testimony in support of aging programs, and possibly facilitate access to other corporate resources.

Conclusion

In this chapter, our goal has been to give you a feel for the broad range of partnership opportunities your organization might pursue. There are, of course, many different ways of categorizing partnerships, and, as you develop your partnership goals, we encourage you to use the organizing principles that make the most sense to you. We also encourage you to be creative—to think about the specific needs, strengths and goals of your organization and of the private sector organizations that exist in your state or community. Ultimately, these factors will determine the kinds of relationships you and your private partners are likely to pursue.

Chapter 4

Developing A Strategic Plan for Partnerships: A Step-by-Step Guide

One approach to public/private partnerships is simply to take them as they come along. Many aging agencies have gotten their feet wet in just this fashion. In the long run, however, we believe the interests of your agency will be better served if you plan for partnerships.

While planning cannot ensure success, we believe that it can help prevent failure. As baseball mogul Branch Rickey once observed, "Luck is the residue of design."[7] Although you may receive unanticipated rewards, they will often be the result of your efforts. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to outline a step-by-step process which you can use to develop a public/private partnership strategy.

Although you can use many of the same steps to develop a specific partnership, we believe it may be more productive to stand back a bit and take a broader view, one that examines the variety of partnership opportunities your agency might pursue, one that considers partnerships in the context of your agency's mission and goals. This approach is particularly appropriate if your agency has some experience with partnerships, but has not yet had or taken the time to reflect on its efforts.

The steps presented below are guides, not a lock-step formula that substitutes for your own judgment and knowledge of your agency and your state or community. Use them to the extent that they're helpful; modify them if, and when, it seems appropriate. Inexperienced network agencies, for example, may wish to skip Step Two for now—a step which asks you to develop a partnership development vision.

Sprinkled throughout the eight steps are "tips" and other suggestions that we've gleaned from the literature and from our interviews with aging network staff who are involved in partnerships. We've also drawn tips and advice from the four companion guides on older worker employment, volunteerism, employer-sponsored eldercare, and health promotion. Of course, not everyone in the network agrees on how partnerships should be approached, but the tips we present were suggested by numerous individuals interviewed over the course of this project.

"Develop a clear vision of where the agency can go realistically in its work with the private sector."

Ron Crummel
Former Director
Northwest Senior Resources, Inc.
Traverse City, MI

Tips on Completing Step One

One way to organize the information gleaned from Step One is to prepare a chart that lists activities, partners, support (kind and level), and outcomes. This chart will be useful not only for AAA staff charged with developing the partnership plan, but also can be helpful in educating your board and/or advisory council about partnerships and your agency's involvement in them.

An Eight-Step Strategic Planning Process

Eight steps are included in the process outlined below. We believe it is important that you complete all eight steps in roughly the sequence outlined, realizing, of course, that some steps may need to be repeated and some may take place simultaneously. Some agencies, for example, may want to informally "Assess Partnership Opportunities" (Step Four) at the same time they work to "Create and Communicate a Partnership Vision" (Step Two). Inexperienced network agencies may wish to skip Step Two altogether now, returning to it after initiating some successful partnerships.

Our goal is not to make completion of the steps unduly burdensome, but to provide a framework though which agencies at varying levels of experience can analyze and assess their current or potential involvement in public/private partnerships. Each step is described in greater detail below:

- Step One: Determine Where You Are Now
- Step Two: Create and Communicate A Partnership Vision
- Step Three: Assess Internal Strengths and Weaknesses
- Step Four: Assess Partnership Opportunities
- Step Five: Develop a Plan for the Partnerships
- Step Six: Approach Business Partners
- Step Seven: Implement the Partnerships
- Step Eight: Evaluate Partnership Efforts

Step One: Determine Where You Are Now

As part of the groundwork for articulating a public/private partnership strategic plan, we believe it is useful to determine where your agency is now *vis-a-vis* partnerships. Specifically, you should identify and review past and current partnership efforts. Useful questions to ask in completing this review include the following:

- In what kinds of partnerships is your agency currently involved?
- What efforts has it undertaken in the past?
- What kinds of issues, problems, or events have been the focus of partnership efforts?
- What kinds of companies have been partners?
- What have been the types and levels of support provided by the private sector?
- Which partnerships have been successful? Why? Which have been unsuccessful? Why?
- What unique characteristics of your agency, your community or the companies in your community have been associated with success or failure?

This review should help you get a complete record of your agency's involvement, past and present, in public/private partnerships. Be sure to include all the activities that have involved private sector participation and support.

This is the time to be inclusive in your own definition of public/private partnerships. You may be surprised at the extent to which the private sector is or has been involved in your agency's activities!

You may also want to spend a little time investigating what other aging agencies and organizations in your area are doing in the way of public/private partnerships. This information can be valuable both in terms of generating initial ideas about partnership possibilities and in identifying companies that are receptive to collaborative efforts with the public or not-for-profit sector.

The successful implementation of this step requires knowledge about the past. A staff meeting or interviews with key staff and members of the governing board and/or advisory council will help fill in information about past efforts. With information about the past, you are ready to begin crafting a vision for the future.

Step Two: Create and Communicate a Partnership Vision

In this step we ask you to become purposeful about your agency's approach to public/private partnerships by articulating a partnership vision. Specifically, this step is designed to help you determine the role that public/private partnerships will play in your agency's operations.

- Will partnerships be a central focus of your agency's efforts or will they assume a minor role?
- Will you actively pursue partnerships, or will you react to partnership opportunities?
- Will you partner with all comers, or will your choice of partners be guided by a set of guidelines or principles?
- Will you pursue fee-for-service partnerships, or will these be explicitly excluded?

These are the kinds of tough questions that must be answered in developing your partnership vision.

The importance of a vision cannot be underestimated. Just as your agency's mission statement provides a framework for evaluating new activities (including this one!) and guides your day-to-day operations, so too will a partnership vision guide your agency's decisions about pursuing specific partnership opportunities.

Crafting a partnership vision will probably be easiest for those of you who have some experience with public/private partnerships and who are reasonably familiar with the businesses in your communities. Those with less experience may wish to complete Step Four, at least informally, before finalizing Step Two. It may also be helpful to begin assessing your agency's internal strengths and weaknesses (Step Three).

A "...vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists. A vision is a target that beckons."

Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus
Leaders
Harper and Row, 1985

Past, Present and Future Contribute to Your Vision

Where do you begin in crafting your partnership vision? One place to begin is the past. Use the information you collected in Step One to see if a vision, articulated or not, has guided past partnership efforts. If so, how well has it worked and why? Can the existing vision be revised, or does it need to be scrapped entirely?

Be careful in abandoning past visions—they usually represent past consensus about what your organization should be doing. If possible, use the past/current vision as a starting place for "revisioning."

Next, consider your current situation—the present. Perhaps there have been significant changes in your organization or your community since the original vision/plan was developed. A simplified "force field" analysis might be useful in identifying the forces that are working for and against the development of partnerships in your community. For example, you may have a new corporation in town with a history of community outreach and volunteerism—a force working toward partnering. On the other hand, your agency might have had a significant staff reduction recently—a possible force working against partnership development.

Certainly this is the time to consider the directives and guidelines of your State Unit on Aging and other governing bodies *vis-a-vis* partnerships. If your vision is "out of synch" with those directives, then you will either need to modify your vision or include specific steps/actions to attempt to change those directives.

Finally, you will want to consider the future as you craft your partnership vision:

- What social, economic, demographic or political changes are on the horizon that will affect your agency, the older population, and business organizations in your community?
- Is the private sector base growing or shrinking?
- Will some businesses begin to confront labor shortages?
- Will the level of support for your agency grow or decline?
- Will the older population become more frail and disabled, or will there be a significant influx of healthy, active elders?

Examples of Vision Statements

In Montgomery County, Maryland, those offices and departments of county government involved in human services provision have developed a set of fundamental human services principles "guiding decisions and choices in the design and development of human services programs and delivery systems." The set includes the following principle related to public/private partnerships:

> "To encourage and involve citizens and education, business, civic and religious communities in sustained and substantial partnerships in the determination of need and the design and provision of human services."

In addition, the 1993 Draft Mission Statement of the Department of Family Resources, which houses the Area Agency on Aging, includes the following language: "The goal is to establish a human services system which is composed of many sustained partnerships including government, religious, business, service and civic organizations." Objectives to implement the mission statement include the following: "Lead in the development of sustainable *partnerships* for meeting a variety of essential human services;" and "Development of strategic plans for selected service systems that include the full participation of governments at various levels; the *business* and religious communities..." (emphasis added).

Using varying assumptions about changes, you may want to develop worst case, best case and "status quo" scenarios of the future. Of course, agencies interested in pursuing either very modest or very few partnership opportunities may have relatively little interest in speculating about the future. Agencies who plan to make a major commitment to the pursuit of public/private partnerships, however, will probably be well served by considering how both internal and external environments may change in the future.

Synthesizing information about the past, the present and, if warranted, the future, your job is to help your agency develop a partnership vision. While there is no one ideal partnership vision, elements of the vision might include the following:

1. A statement about the basic role and value of public/private partnerships in your organization.
2. A discussion of the ethical standards that will guide decisions about entering partnerships.
3. A description of important decision rules that govern how partnerships are initiated, structured, evaluated, etc.
4. Expectations about staff members' roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis partnerships.
5. If appropriate, specific goals about partnerships, such as how many, level of agency support, etc.

It's important to remember that your vision is not the outline for a specific partnership, but rather your agency's statement about how it values partnerships and how it will approach the development of partnerships. In large agencies that have a number of partnerships, it's the glue that holds your individual efforts together. In agencies that are just getting started, it's the framework for new initiatives.

Clearly, crafting your public/private partnership vision is an important process. It's something that the Area Agency director and senior staff should be involved in, but it's also important that the governing/advisory board be involved. They need to be as committed to the vision as senior staff; their enthusiastic approval makes implementation steps easier and gives the agency the sanction it needs within the community at large.

Communicating the Vision is Essential

Once the vision has been created, it must be communicated. It should be written (preferably no more than 10 double-spaced pages) in language that is clear and easily understood by agency staff and advisors, policy makers, other aging network agencies, older persons, and businesses. Your vision must also be "institutionalized as a guiding principle"[8] so that staff instinctively act in ways that are consistent with the vision.

To help staff internalize the vision, it may be useful to develop a slogan or symbol that "captures the essence of the vision and communicates it in a phrase or at a glance."[9] Clasped hands, used on the cover of this guidebook, are a common symbol of partnerships; stylized figures with linked arms are another way to represent partnerships.

We also have used the phrase, "Mutual Needs, Mutual Solutions," in presentations and on overheads to evoke the image of business and aging partnerships. Remember that your slogan or symbol should reflect your agency's vision about partnerships as a strategy rather than represent a particular partnership.

Tips on Creating a Vision

Although the drafting of the partnership vision will probably be the responsibility of a senior staff member, you should consider involving staff at all levels in its development.

A task force with representatives from all units and staff levels is one approach for soliciting direct input and involvement. At the very least, all staff members should have the opportunity to comment on a draft statement.

Stop, Do Not Pass Go

Although this guide is based on the assumption that most AAAs are interested in pursuing public/private partnerships, we realize that one outcome of completing Step Two may be a decision not to become involved in partnerships. Nevertheless, we believe that a decision to forego partnerships will be more acceptable to everyone involved if it emerges from a careful, purposeful process, rather than simply being imposed or made on the basis of incomplete information.

If you decide not to actively pursue partnerships, be sure to make your decision known throughout the organization. Convening a staff meeting to discuss the outcome of Step Two will be helpful for answering questions and allaying any staff concerns. Remember, too, that Steps One and Two can always be repeated if internal or external conditions change.

Benefits of Creating a Vision

- "[Staff] are given specific, reasonable guidance about what is expected of them and why.
- Less time will be expended on debating what to do, how to do it, and why, and more time can be devoted to simply getting on with it.
- A well-tuned vision of success can motivate the organization's members to pursue excellence.
- If a vision of success becomes a calling, an enormous amount of individual energy and dedication can be released in pursuit...of a better future.
- A clear vision of success provides an effective substitute for leadership. People are able to lead and manage themselves if they are given clear guidance about directions and behavioral expectations.
- A vision of success provides important permission, justification, and legitimacy to the actions and decisions that accord with the vision, at the same time that it establishes boundaries of permitted behavior."

Source: John N. Bryson
Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations
Jossey-Bass, 1988

Step Three: Assess Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

With the vision created in Step Two as a backdrop, you are ready to begin an assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses. This assessment is important because it tells you what corrective actions must be taken before your agency is ready to pursue partnerships actively. Key elements of your assessment should include staff/advisor attributes, organizational priorities and pressures, and current and potential opportunities.

Staff/Advisor Attributes

Nearly every Area Agency director we spoke with about public/private partnerships emphasized a link between staff who are familiar with the world of business and successful partnership efforts. Whether or not staff have experience in the private sector is not as important as whether they can look at issues from the perspective of business, communicate effectively with business representatives, and project a "business" image.

If you have such individuals on your staff, so much the better. If not, don't overlook the possibility of using members of your advisory council or other volunteers who have experience in business either to spearhead your partnership efforts or "mentor" an existing staff member who is interested in representing the agency to the business community.

The Delaware Health and Social Services' Division on Aging, for example, hired a retired business executive who recently formed his own communications consulting business to head up its eldercare projects. With more than twenty-five years of experience in public relations, communications, marketing and advertising, this executive brings a wealth of diverse experience that can be used in formulating partnerships between the Division and Delaware businesses.

If neither of these options is available, identify an individual on your staff who is willing to undertake a course of "self-education" which might range from taking business courses at the local community college, to faithfully reading the business section of the newspaper and other business publications in your community. The box at the right includes other tips on how to become educated about business issues and the businesses in your community.

Perhaps it should go without saying, but be sure to choose someone who is not "anti-business." Additionally, staff working with the private sector will need to pay close attention to style of dress and other aspects of personal appearance, and will need to project confidence through strong interpersonal and presentation skills. In short, without a staff member capable of and committed to working with business, it's unlikely that you will be able to capitalize on a full array of potential partnerships.

It's also important to take a moment to look at your advisors (members of the board of directors/advisory council members). As suggested above, you may need to draw upon an advisor to spearhead partnership development efforts if staff are not available. But beyond that, you also need to assess the extent to which your advisory bodies are supportive of and committed to public/private partnerships. Certainly your job will be easier if there is support for partnerships as a legitimate way of doing business. If, on the other hand, your advisors include one or more individuals who strongly and vocally oppose public/private partnerships, you will want to think carefully about how to proceed. You will need to develop strategies to "win over" such individuals, and, if such efforts are unsuccessful, you will need to consider the implications of continued opposition. Again, we do not believe such opposition prohibits the development of successful public/private partnerships, but it certainly must be taken into account as you develop specific strategies.

"We hired a staff person who was at ease with the corporate world to coordinate the [Gatekeeper] program."

James McConnell
Multnomah County Aging Services Division
Portland, OR

Tips on Learning about Business

1. Read the business section of the newspaper daily; maintain a clip file on key businesses.
2. Subscribe to and read business and marketing publications such as *Business Week, Fortune, Forbes, American Demographics,* and *Mature Market Perspectives.*
3. Attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce.
4. Join organizations such as Kiwanis and Rotary that are popular with business representatives.
5. Request and read copies of annual reports.
6. Join professional associations that include counterparts from business.
7. Invite members of the business community to join your advisory board or board of directors.
8. Create a business advisory committee/board for the agency.

"Because increased cooperation with the private sector has been an agency goal for approximately 4 years, new employees are hired in part on the basis of their experience in and ability to work with the private sector."

Muriel Scott
Director
Senior Spectrum
Gardiner, ME

Organizational Priorities and Pressures

Developing public/private partnerships takes time and energy. Sometimes partnership opportunities fall into your lap, but that's the exception, not the rule. Therefore, you need to assess your agency's priorities, as well as internal and external pressures, to ensure that there is sufficient time and commitment to move forward. If, for example, your agency has just assumed the lead role in developing the community-based system of care, this may not be the best time to start a major initiative on partnership development. (Or you may want to limit partnership efforts to those that fit with your systems development activities.) On the other hand, if your area plan calls for the development of a new service, you may want to make partnerships a major part of your development strategy.

There are any number of priorities and pressures that might push your organization toward or away from partnership development, including cuts or increases in funding, agency reorganization, or targeting of special populations of seniors. Of course, upheaval in the business sector of your community may also shape your priorities. Don't automatically assume, however, that bad news for business negates partnership opportunities (see Step Four).

The point here is to remember that unless you are able to increase the size of your staff or use volunteers or loaned personnel to head up your partnership efforts, the time and energy spent on cultivating partners means that there is less to spend on other activities. Cultivating and accommodating business partners may require you to attend early morning breakfast meetings, evening, and even weekend functions. In short, you may have to work harder and longer. Although we believe the extra effort is well worth it for most agencies, we also believe it's important to consider partnership development in the context of other agency priorities and pressures and to be realistic about what you can accomplish.

Current and Potential Opportunities

Although partnership development does take time and energy, it's likely to take more in those agencies that have no prior experience compared to those that are already engaged in partnership efforts. However, even agencies with no prior experience often have "targets of opportunity" or situations where an existing relationship with a private sector organization can be turned into a partnership that meets mutual goals and objectives.

For example, an established relationship with a printer can potentially lead to the donation of printed materials for a special event. Hospital discharge planners who refer clients to your agency can be asked to help develop an educational lecture series on healthy aging featuring physicians affiliated with the hospital.

Again, your assessment of past and current partnership efforts completed in Step One serves as a starting point for identifying current and potential opportunities for new partnerships. If no partnerships are currently active, look to see what other connections your organization has to the private sector:

- Do private sector representatives serve on your board of directors or on an advisory committee/council?
- Does your agency purchase services from small businesses in the community?
- Do your agency's programs benefit the retirees of a particular company or business?

Answering these and similar questions will help you uncover links to the private sector that you may not have considered before and identify potential partners and partnership opportunities.

Conclusion

At the completion of Step Three, you should be aware of your agency's strengths and weaknesses vis-a-vis the development of a public/private partnership strategy. You may conclude that you are well positioned to move forward and continue with Step Four or you may have identified some remedial actions that need to be taken before moving on. You also may have concluded that weaknesses so outnumber strengths that this is not the time to move ahead with partnership strategy development. If you come to the latter conclusion, we hope that you will revisit this process when circumstances in your agency become more favorable.

Step Four: Assess Partnership Opportunities

In Chapter Two we outlined the various reasons why both the aging network and business are interested in forming partnerships with one another. For the network, we noted that agencies are being asked to do more with less, that they are unable to provide new services or expand existing ones, that they have identified unmet consumer needs in the community, and that they are looking for ways to enhance their capabilities. For businesses, we listed motivations that included finding solutions to aging-related personnel and human resource problems, improving marketing and new product development efforts, fulfilling social responsibility/community development commitments, providing new roles for retirees, and enhancing the productivity and commitment of active workers through volunteerism. These sets of motivating factors provide the framework for identifying and assessing partnership opportunities.

In carrying out this step, we confront the proverbial "chicken and egg" problem. With whose needs do we begin? Those of your agency, or those of the businesses in your community? Do you identify the types of partnerships you need to meet your agency's objectives and then try to find the right partners? Or, do you identify the businesses in the community that have needs that your agency might be able to meet in a mutually beneficial way?

"Our agency works very closely with the United Way Corporate Volunteer Council and this is how many relationships are developed between the AAA and the corporate world."

Jackie Moore
Regional Council Area Agency on Aging
Kansas City, MO

Either approach is problematic by itself. If, on the one hand, you focus solely on your agency's needs, you may miss interesting and important partnership opportunities. On the other hand, if you concentrate only on the needs of business, you may fail to meet your own needs and/or may identify partnership opportunities that you are not interested in pursuing or are unprepared to fulfill.

Consequently, we suggest a two-track, simultaneous process that asks you to do a bit of both. Begin with an assessment of the programs and services you currently operate or fund as well as service gaps that have already been identified.

- Is your agency able to support services at a level that will meet projected demand?
- What, if any, cuts in funding do you anticipate?
- What programs, or portions of programs, are in jeopardy?
- What new services do you need in the community to ensure a community-based system of care to help older persons at risk of losing their independence?
- What do you need to strengthen the capacity of your agency to provide leadership in eldercare?

At the same time, quickly assess the major businesses in your community, region or state in terms of the aging/caregiving issues that might be confronting them:

- Are they experiencing labor shortages?
- Are they downsizing?
- Has caregiving in the workplace become an identifiable issue?

Not sure how to get this information? Track the business section of your newspaper for a month. Call the Chamber of Commerce to see what topics have been discussed at recent meetings. Ask your acquaintances in the private sector what issues are being discussed by top management. In short, keep your eyes and ears open for news about the businesses in your community. Although relatively unsophisticated, these techniques can go a long way in identifying the kinds of issues around which you might build a partnership strategy.

Although there are always exceptions, certain business characteristics are often linked to interest in specific aging issues. For example, businesses with workforces that are predominantly female and/or over age 40 are likely to be confronting caregiving issues. Businesses that have historically relied on entry level workers are often interested in expanding their job applicant pools. Companies with a high proportion of older customers often look for ways to improve service to that portion of their customer base. Table 1 summarizes selected characteristics of companies that may predispose them to be interested in aging issues and gives examples of the broad types of companies that often share those characteristics.

In talking with network agencies about partnerships, we've noticed the tendency to focus on large companies, probably because many of the more well known examples of partnerships involve large firms. Although not identical, the same problems are experienced by many small and mid-size firms who should not be overlooked when assessing partnership opportunities. The local pharmacy or drug store, for example, probably relies heavily on older consumers and may be willing to loan its pharmacist for a health education seminar or brown bag pharmacy program.

"Chambers are ready-made coalitions of diverse business and organizational leaders —they're peers talking to peers."

Jean Leonatti
Director
Central Missouri Area Agency on Aging
Columbia, MO

Clearly, the better you know the businesses in your community, the better able you will be to match your needs and interests with those of a potential business partner.

In addition to reading the newspaper and attending meetings to get a feel for the issues confronting businesses in your community, get a list of businesses from your local Chamber and visit the library to see what additional resources are available to tell you about local firms. Many local newspapers annually publish an equivalent of the Fortune 500 for the community.

I've Got the Small Town Blues

One of the most frequent concerns we've heard from aging network agencies in rural areas is that there are few, if any, partnership opportunities available to them because the number of businesses is limited, and those that are available tend to be smaller employers. Although developing public/private partnerships in rural communities does pose some additional, but not insurmountable, challenges, we caution aging agencies in rural areas not to limit their assessment activities to the companies in the immediate community or county.

To recast a popular phrase, "Think regionally, act locally." That is, rural agencies should look at regional companies as well as local firms because they may also have an interest in your community. The electric utility located in the next county, for example, not only provides electricity to the older persons in your community but may also draw employees from your community who are caring for older residents of your county.

Table 1

Characteristics and Types of Companies Interested in Aging Issues

Employer-Sponsored Eldercare

Any company with	Examples:
– a female workforce	–insurance
– a workforce average age of 40 or above	–financial services
	–manufacturing
	–government agencies

Older Worker Employment/Retirement Transition

Any company with	Examples:
–a shortage of entry level workers	–retailing
–an emphasis on early retirement/downsizing	–hospitality
	–fast food outlets
	–banking/financial services
	–manufacturing

Health Promotion

Any company with	Examples:
–a large proportion of older workers	–utilities
–a large number of retirees receiving retiree health benefits	–hospitals
	–mainline manufacturers
–a direct stake in the health care system	

Volunteerism

Any company with	Examples:
–a large retiree population	–utilities/telephone
–a commitment to volunteerism	–selected manufacturers
–a high profile for corporate social responsibility	–specialty retailers/franchises

Older Consumers

Any company with ...	Examples:
–an older customer base	–banks
	–utilities
	–hospitals
	–pharmacies
	–selected retailers
	–insurance
	–financial services

"The success of our partnership with two local hospitals has encouraged agency staff to pursue activities with the private sector that they would have been unlikely to pursue in past years."

Maureen Kelly
Director
West Central Florida
Area Agency on Aging
Tampa, FL

Another approach is to focus on the marketing and public relations interests of smaller businesses such as banks, restaurants and other merchants. Or you may want to consider pooling the resources of individual small businesses through consortia efforts. For example, a project involving "Main Street Merchants" might be more successful than one targeted to individual businesses. Working with the Chamber of Commerce is another approach that has been used successfully by many rural AAAs.

Special promotional events such as a percentage of restaurant meal sales on Mother's Day to support weekend home-delivered meals to isolated, rural seniors may be particularly appealing to small town merchants. In addition, many small towns have special "days"—e.g., Rodeo Days in Woodland Park, Colorado, or festivals, e.g. the Garlic Festival in Gilroy, California, that can provide the focus for partnership efforts.

Rural agencies should also take a close look at the community's older residents to see if there is a concentration of retirees from a particular company or industry. This is particularly important for areas that are attracting large numbers of in-migrant retirees. You may not have an IBM or Xerox in your community, but you may have a significant number of their retirees. You may also have retirees from state or local government, a nearby college or university, or other large employer in the state. Don't overlook their former employers as you consider partnership opportunities.

Developing partnerships in rural or small towns is not impossible, but it does take a little more creativity. In completing this step, our advice is to think very broadly about what constitutes a potential business partner.

It Takes Two to Tango

As our heading suggests, you need to bring together the parallel processes outlined above to move beyond exploration to action. With the list of agency/community needs in one hand, and the list of business needs/interests in the other, your job now is to identify one or more targets for partnership development.

We believe the process of choosing partnership opportunities to pursue will be most fruitful if done within the context of a small group or committee, preferably one with representation from business. If you haven't formed a business advisory committee already, this may be the ideal time to do so. Regardless, it's important to again involve a wide range of staff because staff support for your selections of partnership opportunities to pursue will be important.

In deciding to pursue one partnership possibility over another, you may want to consider such factors as:

- the amount of time and energy required to pursue the partnership
- the time/energy required in relation to the expected benefit
- the benefits and likelihood of success
- the costs and likelihood of failure
- the potential for follow-on efforts
- the public relations potential of the partnership.

It's usually good advice to start small. As the old saying goes, "Nothing breeds success like success." A successful first effort will be particularly important if your staff or board/advisory council are skeptical of the benefits of partnerships.

Good Guys and Bad Guys: Ethical Decisions About Partnerships

No aging agency we know wants to get involved in a partnership that will generate bad publicity or in some other way damage the reputation and goodwill of the agency. Thus, if you haven't done so already as part of your partnership vision (Step Two), we urge you to develop a set of guidelines or principles that will help you evaluate potential partners. Unfortunately, there is no universally accepted set of guidelines that we can discern; what is an unacceptable partner in one community is eagerly sought out in another. Thus you will need to develop guidelines that make sense for your community given the values of its residents and the types of businesses that operate there. Here are some general questions to consider as you develop more explicit guidelines:

- What does the company produce or sell? Are its products harmful, as you define it, to society? To older people?
- What are the firm's employment practices? Has it been sued for age discrimination or does it have a reputation for employment practices that are unfavorable to older workers?
- How does the company treat its older consumers? What is its reputation among older persons in the community? What is its record with the local consumer affairs department or Better Business Bureau?
- Has the business taken an opposing position on an issue of major concern to your agency or your constituents? Would a joint activity reflect negatively on your agency?

The spate of corporate acquisitions and mergers in the 1980s produced a number of hybrid companies that may be difficult to evaluate in these terms. One part of the organization may pass your criteria with flying colors while another may not. Some aging agencies might choose to form a partnership with the good guys while insisting that the name of the bad guys not be used on any promotional/publicity materials. Others may choose to disqualify both halves as potential partners. You may choose to recognize corporate sponsors by name, but not allow the company to use a specific product's name on promotional materials. For example, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs provided publicity for the pharmaceutical manufacturer who supported its Governor's Walk, but not for a specific drug the company wished to promote in conjunction with the event.

We don't have the answer, but we urge you to consider these issues in advance. While decisions about specific partners may be taken up one-at-a-time, your job will be easier if these issues have already been put on the table and discussed openly.

This is also the time to consider how you will decide which firm to approach when there are multiple firms offering the same service/product in the community, such as a printer or pharmacy. The AAA in Montgomery County, Maryland, for example, has developed a policy that requires partnership opportunities be advertised in the local county newspaper.

Resource

Many of the legal issues in public/private partnerships are presented and discussed in *Legal Issues in Public/Private Partnerships: A Technical Briefing*, a publication under preparation by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging for the National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging.

Given the potential complexity of partnership arrangements, you may want to seek legal counsel as you complete this step. This will be particularly important if you plan to enter into contractual arrangements. You should also become familiar with such issues as liability, implied endorsement, exclusivity, intellectual property rights, tax status, and unfair competition. You may want to approach a member of your corporate advisory board to secure legal advice on a *pro bono* basis.

Now it's time to move ahead!

Vocabulary for Business Partnerships

All of us tend to use the jargon of our professions or organizations. These examples highlight differences in the vocabularies used in the aging network and the business community:

Network Language	Business Language
problem	challenge/opportunity
contribution	investment
improve quality of life	achieve measurable outcome
concern for caregiver employees	productivity issue
caregiving employees need help	improve job performance
employ older workers	enhance productivity/cost savings
older workers are reliable	reduced absenteeism/turnover
older workers are friendly	skilled in customer service
older job applicants are available	accessible labor market/work force
promote wellness/health	control health care expenditures
prevent age discrimination	reduce liability, prevent lawsuits
create awareness	create product recognition
failure	learning experience
needs of older adults	product/service opportunities
increase visibility	provide public relations benefit
spend	get return on investment
program	product
high concentration of older adults	potential target market
it hasn't been done	leadership opportunity
public responsibility	responsible corporate citizenship
things we want to do	specific goals/objectives
we'll need some time	by what date
AAA	auto club, Alcoholic's Anonymous?
service area	target market

Source: Thomas E. Akins, President, Age Speak, Lee's Summit, MO

Step Five: Develop a Plan for the Partnerships

Once you've identified potential partners and decided which partnerships to pursue, the next step is to develop a specific plan for the partnerships. As part of the plan development process, you should begin by asking the following questions:

- What exactly will the partnerships accomplish?
- What resources does your agency have/need that can be brought to the partnerships?
- What do you need to do, internally, to get ready for the partnerships?
- What specifically do you want your private sector partners to do?
- What are the benefits that will accrue to your partners as a result of their participation?

Perhaps the most important thing you can do at this stage is to analyze your proposed partnerships thoroughly from a business perspective. You must identify the specific benefits and results that the partnerships offer to business, such as access to customers or potential employees, publicity and name recognition, a service that will benefit employees or retirees, etc. Review Chapter Two for additional ideas.

Put It In Writing

Answering the questions posed above prepares you to put your plan in writing. Depending on the scope and complexity of the proposed partnerships, a written plan that can be presented to potential partners may or may not be necessary. Regardless, the process of putting it in writing will help clarify what you hope to accomplish, what you need to do internally, and what you expect of your partners.

A written business plan is essential if you are proposing a fee-for-service partnership such as employer-sponsored eldercare, or if you are requesting a major investment from a business partner. The basic elements of a partnership plan are summarized on page 34. You may need to add or subtract components depending on the scope and complexity of individual proposed partnerships.

Fee Phobia: When to Sell and How to Price Your Services

The nature of some public/private partnerships will require you to tackle the question of whether or not you should charge for the services provided by your agency. And, if so, how much?

Our experience suggests that the first question is often an uncomfortable one for many aging network agencies that have traditionally relied on public monies and private donations for their support. A number of aging agencies, however, have begun to charge for specific services, such as employer-sponsored eldercare, case management, and older worker programs, because there is a market for these services and because they cannot or should not be provided solely with public support.

Obviously, the nature of the proposed partnership, the scope of your available resources, your organization's philosophy, external guidelines, and community norms will determine whether or not charging is appropriate, but we urge you to give careful consideration to charging a fee when you feel it's appropriate.[10]

If you do decide to charge for your services, the next question is how to price them. Ideally, you will know the unit of service cost for each of the services provided by your agency. If not, you need to begin to assemble this information. In the meantime, you can research what others in the aging network and in your community are charging for similar services.

For example, in its report *Establishing A Partnership for Eldercare: A Guide to Assisting Working Caregivers*,[11] the New York City Department for the Aging Partnership for Eldercare spells out in considerable detail the staff and other resources required to initiate a fee-for-service employer-sponsored eldercare service. The guide provides estimates of the amount of staff time required to plan and carry out various activities such as seminars, individual counseling, preparation of written materials, consultation with other agency staff, etc. This information provides the basis for estimating staff costs, the major cost component of the program. Additional expenses include overhead, office space, supplies, telephone charges, and copying/printing expenses. Total estimated program costs are determined by the scope of the proposed eldercare partnership activities, the estimated demand for consultation and referral services during the first, second and third years, and the estimated time needed for development, marketing and "start up" activities.

Additional guidance for determining costs and charges for corporate eldercare services is provided in a handbook prepared for the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging entitled, *Handbook on Employer Eldercare Services: Determining Costs and Charges for Program Development and Operations.*

Tips

on Preparing Written Materials

- Be succinct.
- Avoid jargon.
- Highlight the benefits to and results for business.
- Clearly describe the partnership.
- Clearly describe your expectations of the partner.

33

Elements of a Partnership Plan

Organizational Resources:

Financial and in-kind resources from your organization and staff to be deployed to carry out the partnership.

Outside Support and Resources:

Contributions (cash and in-kind) to be made by business partners, grants for which you will apply, and elements of your project that are already available in the community and will be used for this partnership.

Operations and Timeline:

How the partnership project will be accomplished and the timeframe, including tasks to be performed by each staff person.

Long-Term Plan:

If your partnership requires significant initial financial resources provided by grants or business contributions, determine the method of continuing the project beyond the first funding cycle. If the project will not be continued, determine what long-term benefits it will provide, if any.

Evaluation:

Determine how you will know if your partnership is a success and meets its goals. Include your business partners, and perhaps those served, in your evaluation plan.

Termination Plan (if appropriate):

Some projects have a natural ending, and the termination plan might be as simple as holding an evaluation meeting with an advisory group and sending thank-you letters to businesses. Other partnerships are of an ongoing nature. The termination plan simply may request businesses to make a one-year commitment and ask for renewed commitment at the end of the year. Still other partnerships are of a more complicated nature and may leave a significant void in services if created and then removed. By creating a termination plan, you will acknowledge your expectations for the length (and possible growth) of the partnership, and be prepared for its possible ending.

D. Jessup

Public/Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment: A Guide for the Aging Network

If one of your partnerships involves soliciting money from business to support new services to be used by the community at large, you will also need to prepare a business plan to demonstrate that you have carefully thought out program costs and considered how the program will be supported over time.

If you are proposing a fee-for-service partnership, such as an employer-sponsored eldercare program, you will need to give considerable attention to the preparation and design of marketing materials. Professional help with editing and design are probably worth the expense. Alternatively, if appropriately presented, you may be able to find a private sector professional who will contribute his or her time to these tasks.

Even if you do not need formal marketing materials, you will need written materials (letter, proposal, etc.) to communicate your partnership opportunities. Remember, you are selling! Your materials must appeal to your customer! If at all possible, have a business person review your materials and provide feedback. Depending on the complexity of your proposed partnerships, you may also want to have an attorney review your promotional materials and/or business plan(s).

Step Six: Approach Business Partners

With a well-developed partnership plan in hand, you are ready to approach potential business partner(s). With each potential partner, the goal of your first call will generally be to schedule a short appointment to meet your business counterpart in person, describe your agency, and present your partnership opportunity.

In many cases, you will already know the appropriate person to contact as a result of previous interaction with the company or general knowledge about the firm. In other cases you will have to do some research to find out who to contact.

Generally, among larger companies, most aging-related partnerships will fall within the purview of one of the following director/manager positions: human resources or personnel; employee benefits; Employee Assistance Programs (EAP); external, public or community affairs; public relations; retiree relations; wellness programs or corporate medical director. Large companies may have someone in charge of work/family or workforce diversity programs. In small firms, you may deal directly with the owner, president or vice-president. Although these are the usual points of contact, your particular partnership may be appropriate for someone in the advertising, marketing, communications/media or corporate contributions departments to consider as well.

If you are unsure who to contact in a medium-size or large firm, call the office of the president, briefly explain your request to the secretary/assistant, and ask to whom your inquiry should be directed. Be sure to get the correct name spelling and title. Members of your business advisory committee or agency advisory council also can help you identify contacts.

Hot, Warm and Cold Calls

"Hot" calls are the easiest to make because you already have an established relationship with the business. Use your existing contacts to identify the appropriate person in the firm to call about this particular partnership opportunity. If possible, have an existing contact prime your target for your call.

"Warm" calls are made to companies where there is no previous relationship, but which have already been contacted on your behalf, usually by another business person. "This peer-to-peer contact gives your organization outside credibility and increases the chance that you will be able to get through by telephone to your potential partner and set an appointment to discuss your partnership."[12] Members of your business advisory committee may be willing to perform this function, which is to open the door for you to sell your partnership personally.

Marketing Materials in Action

Atlanta AAA Markets "The Silver Striders of Georgia, Inc."

To market its new walking program for mid-life and older adults to potential corporate sponsors, the Atlanta Regional Commission (the Area Agency on Aging) developed an attractive presentation folder. Separate sheets provide information on each of the following topics: Overview of the Silver Striders, Background, Need for Organization, Board of Directors, Recruitment of Members, Program Design, Sponsorships, and a two-page, two-year detailed budget of cash and in-kind expenses.

The packet also includes a Sponsorship Contribution Form which provides space for respondents to indicate their level of sponsorship(Gold, Silver or Bronze), as well as to express their interest in volunteering for special events, starting a walking group in their company, and/or providing in-kind services or products listed in the budget.

"Cold" calls are less desirable, but can work in some instances. Most cold calls are preceded by a letter that briefly explains why you wish to contact the company and announces a time frame for a follow-up phone call.

The purpose behind any call—hot, warm or cold—is to arrange for a face-to-face meeting where you can present your partnership opportunity. Remember, "people fund people." Thus, it's extremely important that you be well prepared for the initial meeting. As the old ad slogan goes, "Look sharp, feel sharp, be sharp!" This may be the only chance you get to discuss your partnership opportunity!

Guidelines for Initial Presentations

- Describe your opportunity, without jargon.
- Highlight the benefits to the company.
- Secondarily, highlight the benefits to your organization, clients/customers, and the community.
- Be direct and specific about what you are requesting.
- List the other businesses that have already joined your partnership or have participated in previous collaborations.
- Express confidence and discuss your past successes.
- Listen to your audience's description of the company's needs. Even if the company does not join in this partnership, the information might be useful when you design your next partnership.
- Provide enough time for the company to consider your request and make a decision prior to your event, meeting, or deadline. The first person you contact may need to get approval from above or suggest that you contact another company representative.
- If possible, present several options for involvement; be prepared to respond to alternatives that your potential partner proposes.
- Name a specific date that you will contact the potential partner again, to provide further information or obtain an answer about the partnership.
- Follow up, follow up, follow up.

Adapted from: ***Public/Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment: A Guide for the Aging Network***

Guidelines for making your initial presentation are summarized below.

Regardless of the outcome of your presentation, send a thank you letter for the opportunity to discuss your partnership. This may keep the door open for future partnerships and demonstrates a professional, business approach.

There are, of course, other, more indirect ways to make initial contacts with potential business partners. For example, you might invite human resource managers to a presentation on eldercare in the workplace. This approach allows you to present substantive material of interest to the business community and to introduce your agency and its capabilities. Follow-up meetings can be scheduled with individual attendees.

Members of your advisory council or board of directors may include retired business men and women who would be willing to approach their former employers on your behalf or introduce you to other members of the business community. Similarly, corporate volunteers and even employed children of older clients receiving services from your agency are other sources of "entry" to potential partners. Volunteers and adult children may be willing to introduce you to the appropriate contacts and to advocate on behalf of your organization.

And, don't overlook the obvious—members of your church or synagogue, neighbors, associates in social and civic clubs and organizations. All include business men and women who may be interested in your partnership ideas or may be able to link you with the right person in their company. Joining the Chamber of Commerce or other civic organizations is a good way to begin building business contacts if your experience with business is limited.

Finally, you may want to consider making connections through intermediary organizations that have traditional ties to the business community. For example, many corporations loan their executives and senior managers to serve on United Way councils, committees and task forces.

Once the approaches to prospective partners have been made, be sure to allow sufficient time for the companies to respond. Many companies will have an approval process that involves several departments or managerial levels. The time between presentation and final approval can easily be six months or more. If the approval process looks as if it will be lengthy, you will want to stay in touch with your contact. Ask when it would be appropriate for you to follow-up and then do so; frequently phone calls to check progress are unnecessary and may even annoy your contact.

When word of approval comes, send a thank-you letter to your contact and other individuals in the company as appropriate.

Step Seven: Implement the Partnerships

Now that your partners have agreed to your proposals, you must "deliver the goods." How well you implement your proposal may determine your future opportunities with current and future partners. Timely follow-through is crucial!

Although the amount of work involved to carry out this step will vary depending on the scale, scope and duration of each partnership, at a minimum all partnerships require that someone be responsible for seeing that the agreed-upon activities are carried out and that appropriate publicity is planned to acknowledge your partner's contributions. If your partnership is more complex, or if some time has elapsed since you presented your proposal, it may be helpful to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner to help ensure that everyone is operating on the same set of assumptions and to help prevent things falling through the cracks.

Again, if a particular partnership is complex, or involves fee-for-service arrangements, you may want to develop a written agreement that spells out responsibilities, timetables, etc. It's probably a good idea to consult legal counsel before signing any contract. Many aging agencies we've talked with believe it is in their best interest to draw up the written agreement themselves, rather than rely on their business partners to do so. This approach often saves time and helps move the implementation process along.

"Approximately eight months elapsed from the time we made initial contact with the company to program implementation. The company's approval process was much more complex than we had expected; the approval of several company divisions and groups was required, including the legal department and employee unions."

Susan Aldridge
Denver Regional Council of Governments, AAA
Denver, CO

"Always give credit to your private partners, as enhanced visibility often is the primary benefit of their involvement."

Maureen Kelly
Director
West Central Florida Area Agency on Aging
Tampa, FL

"Identify potential problems before they develop and attempt to develop solutions. Discuss any areas of potential disagreement in advance."

Greg Anliker
Director
Northwest Aging Association
Spencer, IA

This is also the time to begin implementation of your press/publicity strategy. Unless a partnership is unusually short and circumscribed, don't want until "the end" to inform the press and the public about your partner's contributions. Remember, publicity and community good will are often the only benefits your partner will receive; it is incumbent upon you to see that the promised publicity is forthcoming.

Of course, carrying out the planned activities of each partnership is what implementation is all about. If you anticipate the need to make changes in your original plans, let your partner know as soon as possible. Regular communication, even if it involves "bad news," will be appreciated by your partner.

Depending on the duration of the partnership, you may want to schedule regular monthly or quarterly meetings or telephone conversations to keep your corporate contact apprised of your efforts. These communications will also help ensure that your partners carry out their part of the agreement! Alternatively, if your plan involves the creation of an advisory group or planning committee, include your corporate contact as a member.

If evaluation is appropriate, be sure to plan for it at the beginning of the implementation phase. Clarify with your partners how they will judge whether or not the partnership is successful: Will they be looking for the kind and quantity of press coverage? Are they interested in numbers of persons served by a program, or numbers of employed/retired volunteers who participate in an event or program?

Clarifying expectations and anticipated outcomes during the early phase of the partnership will help avoid misunderstandings and will help you identify what needs to be "measured" during the evaluation. At the very least, be sure to ask your partners how they think things are going and whether or not the partnership is meeting their expectations. If not, be prepared to make adjustments if at all possible.

While your publicity strategy should help ensure that your partners receive appropriate recognition throughout the partnership, you also will want to acknowledge and thank your partners at the conclusion of the event and/or partnership. An article in your agency's newsletter or the local "senior" newspaper is a good way of letting older people know about your partner's efforts.

Of course, you will want to send letters thanking your contact and any other members of the organization who have assisted with the partnership. You also should ask your contact if it would be appropriate to send a thank-you letter to his/her supervisor or the company's president or CEO. Pictures and slides say a lot; send them to your contact and others in the organization for use in internal communications and other corporate publicity campaigns.

Step Eight: Evaluate Partnership Efforts

We talked above about evaluating individual partnerships and their outcomes. Here we're concerned with evaluating your agency's overall partnership efforts. Again, this is the time to stand back and assess the impact of partnerships on your agency, older persons in your community, and your business partners.

- Has your agency's foray into the realm of public/private partnerships gone smoothly, or has it created problems for your agency or others in the community?
- How have your partnerships benefitted your agency? Businesses? Older people in the community?

When answering these questions, be sure to include both tangible and intangible benefits. Include not only the specific positive outcomes of the partnerships, such as more meals delivered, but also such intangibles as increased awareness in the community of your agency and its mission. Perhaps your staff members have a new enthusiasm for their work.

By the same token, carefully assess the tangible and intangible costs associated with your partnership efforts. Are staff resources spread too thin? Have turf battles among community agencies intensified?

While you may want to do an initial assessment of the benefits and costs of your partnership efforts, it's also a good idea to ask your staff for their assessment. You may want to convene a special meeting to obtain feedback from as wide a group of staff as possible. It's important to learn if your staff feels buoyed or burdened by your agency's partnership efforts. Staff also may see opportunities for new or expanded partnerships that you've overlooked.

Perhaps the most important component of this step is to assess your current and planned partnership efforts against your partnership development vision. Are you on target? If not, why? Do you need to rethink your partnership efforts, or do you need to "revision?" Although changes to the vision should be carefully considered, the vision statement is a "working" document that should reflect the current conditions of your agency and your community. Significant changes in your internal or external environments will probably cause you to revisit your vision.

If, on reflection, your partnership efforts are significantly out of synch with your vision, you may want to develop strategies to adjust or even eventually terminate some partnerships. Or, if you are making progress in meeting the goals of your partnership development vision, you will want to take some time to plan how to build on your current successes and perhaps add new goals and objectives.

Although evaluation and self-assessment are often approached with a sense of dread, we believe this is an important step to complete. Unless you periodically assess where you are against where you would like to be, you run the risk of getting seriously off track and/or disappointing your staff, your advisors, and older persons in the community.

Conclusion

We realize that completing the eight steps outlined above may be more difficult than we've made it sound. We believe, however, that agencies seriously interested in forging meaningful partnerships with the private sector will profit from completing the steps. Whether or not you have followed each step exactly as it has been laid out is less important than the fact that you have helped move your agency forward.

Tips on Talking with Business Partners

In addition to being mindful of the vocabulary shifts presented on page 32, you will need to think about how to direct and conclude your meeting. Considering the following phrases from *Power Talking* by George R. Walther:[13]

- We share some important common goals. Let's see how we can work together.
- What questions do you have? (eliminates a simple yes or no answer).
- Let's verify that we're both in complete agreement by wrapping this up with a recap of our understanding.

Chapter 5

Strategic Planning for Partnerships: Roles for State Units on Aging

Although Area Agencies need written guidance regarding various aspects of partnerships, many also want additional tangible evidence of state support for their efforts.

The language of the 1992 amendments to the Older Americans Act makes it clear that State Units on Aging have a special responsibility to provide oversight to Area Agencies on Aging regarding contractual relationships with non-public entities. In addition to this role, however, we believe that state agencies, if they so choose, can actively assist AAAs and Project CARE Coalitions in developing partnership strategies. After a brief discussion of the oversight role, we use this chapter to explore the additional roles that state agencies might pursue.

State agencies can help AAAs, Project CARE Coalitions and other aging network agencies develop partnership strategies by:

1. Clearly articulating the state agency's policies and reporting requirements *vis-a-vis* public/private partnerships.

As we pointed out in Chapter One, State Units on Aging were required by the Administration on Aging to set forth guidance regarding the involvement of Area Agencies on Aging in providing employer-sponsored eldercare services. AoA's Program Instruction was aimed at requiring State Units to provide oversight to Area Agencies to ensure that the public mission of the Older Americans Act was not compromised by involvement in employer-sponsored eldercare efforts, particularly those involving fee-for-service arrangements.

Clearly, state agencies will continue to have an oversight role under the Older Americans Act, a role that many believe is strengthened and expanded by the new language contained in the 1992 amendments. (The new amendments set forth additional reporting requirements for AAAs *vis-a-vis* the area plan, and require AAAs to disclose, on request from the Commissioner or the State Unit, the sources and expenditures of all funds, including those derived from public/private partnerships.)

While we cannot second guess how state agencies will respond to the opportunity to provide additional oversight, we would encourage them to consider carefully the role that public/private partnerships currently play in their own operations and those of the state's AAAs, to work with Area Agencies to develop reporting guidelines that are meaningful and workable, and to communicate clearly the resulting guidelines to all affected parties.

2. Providing socio/demographic data on the state's middle-aged and older population.

To educate businesses about the challenges and opportunities created by an aging society, network agencies need timely information about the middle-aged and older population. While the targeting requirements of the Older Americans Act require AAAs to analyze the older population by such characteristics as poverty status, living arrangement, age and location (urban/rural), aging agencies do not always develop a complete profile of the older population or become familiar with the characteristics of the middle-aged. Yet the needs and concerns of middle- and upper-income elderly and the middle-aged are often of considerable interest to businesses. By providing AAAs with a wider array of socio/demographic data, State Units can help broaden partnership possibilities at the local level.

3. Conducting research on the aging-related needs and interests of the state's businesses.

Just as Area Agencies need to have a complete picture of the middle-aged and older populations in their planning and service areas, so too do they need to be familiar with the potential business partners in their communities. Certainly much of the investigation of the needs and interests of local businesses will have to be conducted by the AAA or Project CARE Coalition itself, particularly those in urban areas, but many times, the state agency also can play an important role in identifying business characteristics and concerns.

State-led data collection may be particularly helpful in identifying the interests of businesses with (a) multiple locations in the state or (b) employees/retirees residing in counties surrounding the headquarters location—counties that may be served by different AAAs. In general, greater familiarity with the state's economy and businesses benefits all aging agencies by making them more conversant about business issues and thus more credible to potential business partners.

While some State Units may have the time and resources to conduct original research with the business community, it may also be possible to draw upon the resources of the state's economic development or commerce departments. Other business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce also conduct surveys of their members and may be willing to address aging issues. In some communities, banks collect data about the economy and prepare forecasts of industry growth and decline.

4. Actively and visibly supporting the efforts of AAAs to develop partnership strategies.

Although Area Agencies need written guidance regarding various aspects of partnerships, many also want additional tangible evidence of state support for their efforts. A visit by a state representative, for example, symbolically signals that the State Unit on Aging is committed to public/private partnership strategy development and helps communicate the importance of the AAA's efforts to staff. It may even be useful to have a state agency staff member designated as the partnership strategy development "troubleshooter" or "mentor"—someone local aging agencies can call upon as needed to lend support to their efforts.

...greater familiarity with the state's economy and businesses benefits all aging agencies by making them more conversant about business issues and thus more credible to potential business partners.

5. Providing technical assistance and training to local aging agencies.

State Units can help AAAs, Project CARE Coalitions and other aging agencies initiate and sustain partnership strategy development efforts by providing technical assistance and training around a variety of issues ranging from developing a partnership "vision," to approaching business partners, to negotiating contracts. Through regular meetings, annual conferences and other training sessions, the State Unit can also provide an opportunity for aging agencies to share their success stories, identify pitfalls, and plan collaborative efforts where appropriate. States also may wish to develop sample marketing materials that can be adapted by local aging agencies.

6. Developing evaluation criteria and guidelines.

As part of their monitoring responsibilities under the Older Americans Act, State Units probably will have developed criteria and guidelines for evaluating partnerships involving fee-for-service and other contractual arrangements. By logical extension, states may be able to collaboratively assist AAAs and other local aging agencies in developing criteria for evaluating other types of public/private partnerships and in facilitating the exchange of information among network agencies who are engaged in strategic planning efforts.

...each State Unit must decide for itself how it will respond to its own opportunities for partnerships...

Conclusion

In sum, State Units on Aging can play a variety of roles vis-a-vis the partnership strategy development initiatives of local aging agencies. Although responsibility for the success of strategic planning efforts and individual partnerships ultimately rests with the initiating AAA, Project CARE Coalition or other aging organization, we believe that the chances of success are enhanced by the presence and active participation of a supportive state agency. At the very least, each State Unit must decide for itself how it will respond to its own opportunities for partnerships and carry out its oversight responsibilities mandated under the Older Americans Act.

End Notes

1. Committee for Economic Development. *Public-Private Partnership: An Opportunity for Urban Communities* (2nd edition). Heffernan Press, Inc., 1983.
2. Pennsylvania Department of Aging. *1991 Celebrating Partnerships.* Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Aging, 1991.
3. S. Salyer, *Making the Connections: Public-Private Partnerships in Child Care*, CCAC National Advisory Panel Exchange #1. New York: Child Care Action Campaign, February 1990.
4. R.C. Levin. Written testimony submitted to The Subcommittee on Human Services, U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Aging, for the hearing entitled *Public Private Partnerships: The Opportunities, The Risks*, June 5, 1990.
5. U.S. Administration on Aging, Program Instruction 90-06, April 10, 1990.
6. Older Americans Act Amendments of 1992. Public Law 102-375—September 30, 1992.
7. *Time Magazine*, November 2, 1992.
8. W. Bennis & B. Nanus, *Leaders*, Harper and Roy, 1985, page 107.
9. Andrus Gerontology Center and The California Department of Aging, *Developing Community Based Systems of Care: A Guidebook for the Aging Network*, Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1991.
10. Area Agencies on Aging will need to check with the State Unit on Aging regarding its guidelines on when and how to charge for employer-sponsored eldercare services.
11. Partnership for Eldercare, New York City Department for the Aging, *Establishing A Partnership for Eldercare: A Guide to Assisting Working Caregivers.* New York: The New York City Department for the Aging, 1990. Available from the New York City Department for the Aging, 280 Broadway, New York, NY 10007.
12. D. Jessup, *Public/Private Partnerships in Older Worker Employment: A Guide for the Aging Network.* Washington, DC: Washington Business Group on Health, 1992.
13. George R. Walther, *Power Talking.* New York: Putnam, 1991.

Washington Business Group on Health
National Eldercare Institute on Business and Aging
777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 800 • Washington, DC 20002
202/408-9320 • TDD 202/408-9333 • FAX 202/408-9332

Printed on recycled paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE